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**<http://house.louisiana.gov/acadiana/>**

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## **MOVING FORWARD ON I-49 SOUTH**

**BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA**--Members of the Acadiana Legislative Delegation are taking the political lead to move forward on the proposed Interstate 49 South project, pledging to aggressively pursue state and federal funding.

Senator Mike Michot, senior member of the Acadiana Delegation, along with Delegation Chair, Rep. Jonathan Perry, and Vice Chair, Rep. Simone Champagne, today responded to a proclamation issued by Governor Bobby Jindal creating an I-49 South Task Force. Michot, in his role as Chairman of the Louisiana Senate Finance Committee and the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, pledged to identify state dollars to match federal funds for the project with the backing of the Delegation.

Michot is also a member of the Task Force which is charged with identifying funding sources and /or innovative financing alternatives to fully fund the proposed project and to document the level of support for the I-49 South Project.

Details of the response were made public during a news conference which was attended by elected officials and representatives of public entities impacted by the proposed upgrading of U.S. 90 from the Westbank Expressway in New Orleans to and including a connector to Interstate 10 in Lafayette. Also present at the news conference were representatives of Chambers of Commerce acting on behalf of business interests along the corridor.

The news conference was the first phase of a campaign to raise public awareness and garner grassroots support.

Three major issues are identified as the driving forces behind the I-49 South initiative:

Enhanced Public Safety For Motorists

Economic Development

The Necessity For A Major Traffic Corridor To Serve America's Energy Needs

A list of resolutions of support released at the news conference indicates a strong political base from which the Acadiana Legislative Delegation will spearhead the effort to identify funding resources at the state and federal level.

However, Michot and Representatives Perry and Champagne emphasized the support of the business community and the general public is essential to success. A marketing effort to be funded by private interests will be designed to raise public awareness and to encourage grassroots support.

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